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VCA JUL 15-88

Rec'd 6 Apr 88

GAO

At the request of the Subcommittee on Transportation, Aviation, and Materials of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) is initiating a Survey of Investment in Foreign Aerospace Vehicle Research and Technological Development Efforts under assignment code 392403. Our survey objective is to develop an approach and methodology for (1) gathering financial data, (2) measuring investments in foreign aerospace vehicle development by the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union, Japan, and others, and (3) comparing those investments with U.S. government and industry investments in the National Aero-Space Plane (NASP) Program. The survey will begin in March 1988 and will be conducted by our National Security and International Affairs Division. We expect to complete our survey work by July 1988.

Specifically, we are interested in collecting, measuring, and comparing foreign government and industry investment in the British Horizontal Takeoff and Landing (HOTOL) vehicle, French Hermes Spaceplane, German Sanger II Advanced European Space Transportation System, Soviet Aerospace Plane and Hypersonic Transport, Japanese H-II Orbiting Plane (HOPE) and future spaceplane. We plan to collect information on facilities, their capabilities, and the number of people working on these programs. We also plan to collect information on ground test facilities (such as hypersonic wind tunnels) in Belgium and Australia.

We plan to conduct survey work at the Department of Defense, Department of the Air Force, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Commerce, Department of State, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Office of Science and Technology Policy in the Executive Office of the President, and NASP Joint Program Office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. We also plan to visit NASP Program contractors, as appropriate.

We would like to discuss these matters with officials of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to determine whether the CIA has any studies, analyses, assessments, or other information--or know of any individuals and/or organizations that could provide us with such information--on investment in foreign aerospace vehicle research and technological development efforts that would be useful in responding to our congressional request.